

SALISBURY JUNCTION VIADUCT
Western Maryland Railway
Spanning Casselman River, SR 219 and T 381
Meyersdale vicinity
Somerset County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-371

HAER
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Spanning Casselman River, SR 219 and T 381, Meyersdale (vic.), Summit Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1911

Present Owner: CSX

Present Use: Railroad Viaduct

Significance: This viaduct across the Casselman River Valley was on the Western Maryland Railway's Connellsville Subdivision, which ran from Cumberland, Maryland, to Connellsville, Pennsylvania. The 1,900-foot-long structure is one of the Western Maryland Railway's longest viaducts.

Historian: Scott C. Brown, 1992.

Project Information: The results of the study of Somerset County were published in 1994: Gray Fitzsimons, Ken Rose, and Patricia Summers (eds), Somerset County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service). The contents of the publication were transmitted to the Library of Congress as individual reports. Research notes, field photos and copies of historic photos collected during the project were transmitted to the AIHP Collection, Special Collections, Stapleton Library, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

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The Salisbury Junction Viaduct is a single-track 1,900'-long structure built to accommodate two sets of tracks. Presently abandoned, it consists of a deck plate-girder section supported by steel bents resting on concrete piers, some of which are as tall as 40'. Rust is penetrating the light green paint on much of the structure. The rails have been removed from the deck but the guardrails remain. The abutments as well as the short tunnel over T 381 are concrete.

The Western Maryland's origins date back to 1852 when the Baltimore, Carroll and Frederick Rail Road Company was chartered. The following year it became the Western Maryland Rail Road Company but was not actually completed until 1859. The original 10-mile route ran from Hollins to Owings Mills, Maryland.

The City of Baltimore provided financial support to keep this line running and the railroad provided an important transportation function during the Civil War. By 1884 the railroad was extended to connect with other railroads and freight volume increased, especially coal. In 1902, George Gould and the Fuller Syndicate purchased the railroad from the City of Baltimore to be part of a transcontinental railroad system. In 1907, shortly after the railroad expanded to Cumberland, Maryland, revenues could no longer pay for improvements, and the Western Maryland entered into receivership.

In 1910, Rockefeller interests gained control, and the Western Maryland Railway emerged. The same year three engineering teams completed the survey for the new Connellsville Subdivision and construction began. Originally designed for four sets of tracks, the route was modified to accommodate two. Only one set was actually built. In 1912, the Connellsville Subdivision was completed through Somerset County from Cumberland to Connellsville (where it had a traffic alliance with the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad). The Carter Construction Company of Pittsburgh was the main contractor for the required tunnels, viaducts, and bridges. The route ran roughly parallel to the B&O Railroad along the Casselman and Youghiogheny Rivers, but the grade was not as steep. The first train passed through Somerset County on the new route in May 1912. Although the 88-mile route was primarily built for freight traffic, passenger service was also provided and many depots were constructed.

Boring on the tunnel was begun from both ends, using air compression drills and dynamite. The tunnel was holed through in December 1911 and completed in 1912 by the Carter Construction Company. Interestingly, the tunnel was constructed for only one set of tracks, instead of the usual two sets of tracks in other

Connellsville Subdivision projects. In 1915 the Western Maryland took over the 5-mile Somerset Coal Railway from Coal Junction on the B&O railroad to Bell. At that time the Western Maryland Railroad had trackage rights on the Somerset & Cambria Branch of the B&O from Coal Junction to Rockwood.

The B&O railroad bought a large percentage of the Western Maryland Railroad in the 1920s. After a compromise was reached with the federal government, the ownership of the Western Maryland was held in trust, allowing the company to operate with relative independence. The important coal route from Coal Junction to Bell was later acquired by a merger with the Somerset Coal Railway Company in 1950. In 1967 the B&O railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad acquired full ownership of the Western Maryland Railway. The B&O (by then itself a subsidiary of the Chesapeake and Ohio) gained full ownership of the Western Maryland Railway in 1972. The Chessie System was created in 1973 to own and operate all three railroads. Shortly after the Chessie System was created the Western Maryland Railway Connellsville Subdivision, which ran from Hancock Maryland to Connellsville, was terminated. Big Savage Tunnel was abandoned along with the rest of the Subdivision. The Chessie System then merged with the Seaboard System in 1980, becoming CSX Corporation. CSX Transportation, Inc. was formed in 1987. There are now plans to rehabilitate the tunnel as part of a rails-to-trails project. An initial estimate by the engineers Transmark Associates for rehabilitation of the tunnel is \$500,000.

The Salisbury Junction Viaduct was constructed in 1911 by McClintic-Marshall Construction Company of Pittsburgh. Eight workers died during construction of the viaduct, six in an accident in which a crane on the viaduct fell. It took two weeks to clear the wreckage and install a new crane before work could be continued. The first Western Maryland Railway train crossed the viaduct in January 1912. By the mid-1970s the Western Maryland Railway Connellsville Subdivision was abandoned. CSX subsequently acquired the property of the Western Maryland Railway, though it no longer uses the viaduct.

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